

Italianicious (June-August '09 Edition)

Italianicious

ESSENCE OF ITALY

BELLA TOSCANA
STUNNING REGION,
AMAZING PEOPLE,
BEAUTIFUL WINES

NONNA ORSOLA
LEARNING TO
COOK IN RAVELLO

**LIGURIA'S
OLIO D'OLIVA**
ELIXIR OF THE GODS

**NOW YOU SEE IT,
NOW YOU DON'T**
THE HIDDEN WINERY OF
CASTELLO DI VOLPAIA

la pentola

One-pot meals for winter

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VOL 5 ISSUE 2 \$6.50 (INC. GST)

ISSN 1832-5955



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 **vella nero**
COFFEE COUTURE

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SYDNEY ITALIAN FESTIVAL

The people of Sydney can expect another wonderful Sydney Italian Festival this year. The Italian Festival showcases the best of Italy and coincides with celebrations for Italian National Day on 2 June.

The 6th annual Festival will be celebrated from 19 May until 8 June. The Festival is organised by the Italian Trade Commission's Sydney office with the support of countless Italian institutions, businesses and individuals. On display will be a collection of Italy's finest food, fashion, art, wine, design, and culture. Big community events include Primo Italiano (24 May) in Stanley Street, and ViVa Leichhardt (1-7 June) in Norton Street.

Italianicious is running two events during the festival – details can be found in our events section (pages 62 and 63).

Throughout the Festival period and across more than 150 events, the city of Sydney will be able to once again discover some of the finest, most authentic 'Made in Italy' products.

Visit www.sydneyitalianfestival.com.au for more information.

TOURS TO ABRUZZO CONTINUE AFTER QUAKE

The popular personalised tours of the ancient and picturesque central Italian region of Abruzzo will continue through 2009, despite the terrible earthquake that has damaged l'Aquila and some of the surrounding villages in northern Abruzzo.

Luciana Masci and Michael Howard, operators of Absolutely Abruzzo Tours, have extended their heartfelt sorrow to earthquake victims and their families but have decided their 2009 tour itinerary will continue.

"For a long time now our guests have been fulfilled by the experiences they have had in the rural areas of Abruzzo and this year we want to do what we can to make sure we are part of the recovery effort in the affected areas," says Luciana.

Absolutely Abruzzo Tours begin their 2009 season with the popular Along the Shepherds Tracks tour which gives guests a broad appreciation of southern and eastern Abruzzo. The tour departs Roma on 31 May, 6 September and 27 September.

The Medieval Magic of Abruzzo tour leaves Roma on 28 June and 26 July. This tour covers central Abruzzo and the picturesque Gran Sasso National Park area, although some visits may need to be altered following the earthquake.

Absolutely Abruzzo Tours also runs a Gourmet Getaway experience that offers short breaks in Abruzzo for three days/two nights from May to October.

For more information contact Luciana Masci on 1800 641 136 or email info@absolutelyabruzzo.com.

LIVING ITALY

People wishing to enjoy a little culture and music with their travels should visit Living Italy's website for a complete list of what's coming up over the Italian Summer Music Festivals tour.

The website lists many festivals in the Living Italy Summer Music Festivals tour, including the new Trasimeno Music Festival, the Spoleto Festival and the Ravenna Festival.

The famous Spoleto Festival, founded in 1958 by Gian-Carlo Menotti, has recently been taken over by the local municipality following the composer's death and has been completely rejuvenated. This fascinating Umbrian hill-top town boasts a wonderful array of outstanding venues, which was why Menotti chose it in the first place. These include a ruined Roman theatre for dance events, a tiny 'horse-shoe' theatre for lunchtime concerts, and a beautiful Romanesque church for late-night events. The town, quiet at other times of the year, is an exciting place to be at festival time, and this year, for the first time, Living Italy will be staying within the city walls to make the most of the many lunchtime and late-night concert opportunities.

Also on offer is the famous Verona Opera Festival held in the impressive remains of a Roman amphitheatre that dates back to the first century AD. This is certainly Italy's most famous summer music festival, and also one of its oldest.

Robert Gay, a popular Sydney music lecturer, will host the tour in July 2009.

Visit www.livingitaly.com.au for tour details.

FROM VELLUTO TO VELLA

What started as Velluto Nero café has now evolved into a new, more modern brand: Vella Nero.

New Zealand-born sisters Gina, Vicky and Aileen Young left their diverse corporate careers to launch a coffee business in September 2007. As the only in-store coffee roasters based in the heart of the Sydney CBD, they won their first coffee roasting award just seven weeks after launching. Within their first seven months, they took home the rare and coveted 'Champion Espresso' title together with the only gold medal awarded for coffee at the 2008 Sydney Royal Fine Food Show. This was followed by a review in the Sydney Morning Herald's Good Living section, where they were named 'Sydney's Best Coffee' after an extensive search for coffee excellence. Later in the year, the café was awarded a 'Top Pick' for NSW in the Delicious Café awards – another huge feat for any newcomer.

The sisters' unique concept combines a bustling café with a one-stop-shop for 'all things coffee'. They cater for retail, corporate and wholesale, and you can purchase freshly-roasted coffee beans, specialty loose-leaf teas, Belgian hot chocolate, coffee machines, equipment and accessories both in-store and online.

As owner-operators, the Young sisters pride themselves on their product. Always freshly-roasted the green beans are selected on strict criteria which include using only 100% Arabica beans, a focus on sustainability and above all, the end-taste profile. Vella Nero captures the essence of the former name, Velluto Nero, and has been combined with the name 'Vella' (paying homage to their first coffee roasting machine). Visit www.vellanero.com.au for further details.